

QA & T

Interview Hasmita Amtha

EKASI TV

Ekasi TV is bringing kids back to the city's parks and offering them a safe haven at the same time. Graeme Joffe, the director of Township TV, enlightens us about this amazing project

How did Township TV come about?

About three and half years ago, a friend of mine living in Dainfern (a residential estate in Joburg) wanted to put up a big screen TV in Diepsloot (to show football) and asked me if I wanted to assist. I saw this as a great opportunity not only to show football but to also show educational programmes and give the people free entertainment. I approached JHB City Parks and five months later, we had our first big screen TV up in Diepsloot. Today, we have 22 permanent big screens up around the country. We have partnered with the various municipalities and MTN are the title sponsors of 'Township TV - Ekasi TV'. Together, we are changing lives and uplifting the communities.

Tell us about this exciting initiative and how will it benefit the community?

The TVs go on at 2pm daily with cartoons/ Disney channel for the kids followed by educational programming, music and sport. The PSL is the big drawcard and we show all games live throughout the week and weekends. Often the TV's don't switch off until 10pm. We also provide 24-hour security, so this gives all the kids and communities a chance to be in an open, secure environment, and more importantly, off the streets which helps to reduce crime. We also show some of the Bok and Proteas games, so the kids can see a Makaya Ntini and a Bryan Habana - and hopefully, this will encourage them to play rugby and cricket and who knows, become our future SA sporting heroes.

What type of shows will you be broadcasting?

We have a range of channels from Disney to sports channels. They are screened from two in the afternoon till eight in the evening, and from Mondays to Sundays. We have created the project to accommodate kids to teens who have various interests, so that they can learn and live their dreams.

What has been the reception to Township TV?

It has been amazing and I guess an



attendance of 635 000 people during the World Cup is a good marker. The communities have taken ownership and it's become an outing for the family to spend time in the beautiful City Parks and enjoy their favourite programming on a big screen at no cost.

Do you have any plans on spreading this initiative across the country?

We currently have 22 sites set up across the country and we would love to spread the goodwill but it all depends on funding. MTN has been incredible to date and we look forward to continuing the 2010 FIFA World Cup legacy.

How will football be integrated into this initiative?

Football is a huge part of the initiative. We schedule all live PSL games and show as much English Premiership as possible. It is the 2nd best seat in the house for the football fans that can't get to or afford the various games.

What has been your experience with being involved with a project like this?

It has been the most challenging but the

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Right Hundreds of Sowetan residents came together at the Ekasi TV park to experience the 2010 World Cup



most heart warming thing I've ever done. To see the smiles on the kids' faces when they're watching cartoons brings a huge smile to my face. It feels so good to know that we are making a difference in people's lives and the communities are so grateful. I cannot keep count of how many times a community member has said to me: "Ulungu, thank you for what you are doing for us". It makes me feel very good!

And how has this experience influenced your life, both personally and professionally?

Personally, it has made me even more appreciative of what I have in life. It breaks my heart to see kids running around the parks in the middle of winter with no shoes,

no socks and no jerseys. I just wish we could do more as I believe poverty is one of our biggest crimes in SA. Professionally, it has given me the chance to interact with so many unheralded people who do so much for this great country of ours.

The Gogo Project (an initiative that has been created to allow elderly women to become entrepreneurs) has been hugely successful. Could you tell us how this would work in relation to Township TV?

This is still on the back burner but what Township TV has created business opportunities for hawkers outside the parks. I remember my very first site visit to Diepsloot and there was not one hawker outside the park, today you could find a sweet stand, a hairdresser and tailors. ☺

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MTN EKASI TV – ALL PARKS
Week days
 2pm Disney DSTV Channel 303
 3pm Kids Co DSTV Channel 308
 5pm Trace DSTV Channel 325
 6pm SuperSport 4 DSTV Channel 204 (PSL shows)
 or
 2pm Boomerang DSTV Channel 302
 4pm Kids Co DSTV Channel 308
 5pm Africa Rocks DSTV Channel 326
WEEKENDS
Saturday
 2pm Trace DSTV Channel 325
 3pm SuperSport 3 DSTV Channel 203
 6pm SuperSport 4 DSTV Channel 204
Sunday
 2pm SuperSport 4 DSTV Channel 204
 5pm SuperSport 3 DSTV Channel 203

For more info visit: www.townshiptv.co.za